1: Maes--130 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Sakata F043
Teke F133

M 302

as to broaden the forehead. The brow is sharply delineated at right angles and framed by two corners projecting over the temples.

M 302 534

Let us note that the custom of shaving part of the scalp is hardly a general one. The types of headdress we have just described are seen regularly, but by no means are worn by all the natives. It even seemed to us that they tend to be the prerogative of the chiefs, dignitaries, and their families, but we dare not assert that they constitute a right, a strict prerogative. [174]

S [302 301 142]

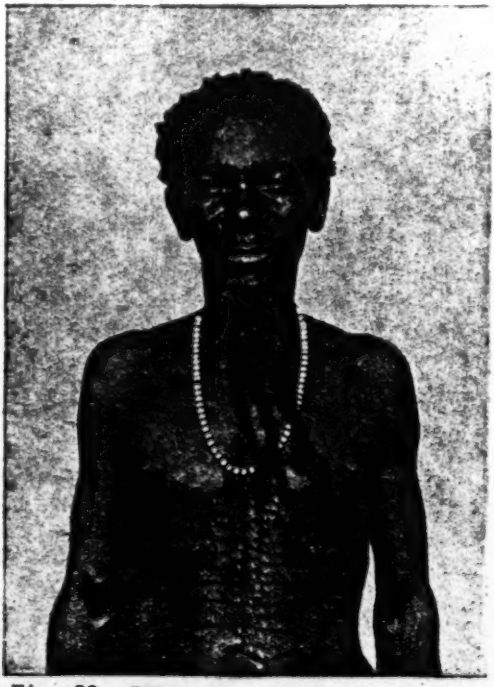

Fig. 93. Batete Type with Long Beard, Plucked Eyelashes and Eyebrows.

M S 304

The Bateke and Banfumu file the middle upper incisors in the shape of an isosceles triangle, break them, or pull them out. We observed this custom among some of the Baboma. The majority of the Baboma, however, have their teeth filed to a point, a custom that prevails up to the Bokala region and along the north bank of the Kasai up to 23° longitude east of Greenwich. "Basongo-Meno" seems to mean "people with filed teeth" and may have

M 304

1: Maes--136 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Teke F133
Yaelima M

are worn in the hair, around the neck, on the wrists and ankles, and at the waist. 301

From Stanley Pool to Mushie, the women slip a crown of cowries into the hair, sometimes wear bracelets of brass or glass beads on the wrist and forearm, and hang brass necklaces or imported beads strung on fibers around the neck. Very often the necklace goes from the shoulders under the arm. Throughout this region, imported ornaments predominate. Only the chiefs have retained a few special ornaments from the old days, notably the necklace and bracelet of worked brass and the necklace adorned with the teeth of leopards or lions. These latter objects are associated with a privilege, a prerogative, a right of use.

M T 301 554

M [301. 576 854]

Fig. 101. Group of Batitu Women. Hairdos and Ornaments.

They are, in a way, badges of rank. In the full regalia worn by [180] Natali, a typical native petty chief, each detail seemed to have a special meaning. He had donned his finest costume in our honor and to impress us: an old tunic from the Belgian Regiment of the Guides, and a government medal around his neck on a chain, the badge of a native chief recognized by the government. He had attached a small whistle to the same chain, along with the five or six medals for his wives' taxes. Over this chain he wore the necklace of the native chiefs, made of brass and

T 301 554 302

1: Maes---138 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Sakata F043

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534

No less interesting is the full ceremonial regalia of the chiefs of the Lake Leopold II tribes. This varies according to the importance of the chief, but it always includes a number of cowries and one or several brass disks attached to the hairdo and the loincloth. The right to wear disks in the hairdo dates from olden times and is reserved to the chiefs and great dignitaries by ancestral custom.

The practice is found all along the Lukenie. From Lake Leopold II to Dekese, these disks have the same shape and

S
[29]
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534]

Fig. 103. An Old Native Chief of Lake Leopold II Adorned with his Insignia and Accompanied by his Two Favorite Wives and his Lukumbe Player.

ornamental designs. Their manufacture is reserved to the important blacksmiths upon authorization by the local Mfumu na Tse of the region. [182]

M
[326]

Leopard skins, iron or brass bells hung from the waist, and the right to wear certain knives of a special shape at the waist are also prerogatives of the chiefs and dignitaries throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie region.

We are thus confronted with various manifestations in the material life which are so many indications of the common origin or kinship of these different tribes.

224 absolute and inescapable necessity for those tribes who have Batswá, since the latter provide them with a certain amount of the necessary meat, though in insufficient quantity. The people hunt in groups and individually -- in the latter case primarily by means of traps. Fishing with nets is also very widespread, although various other methods are also known. The picking of fruit, caterpillars, mush-
222 rooms, vegetables, etc. continues to be popular.

463 Among trades, that of the smith is foremost. However, iron casting has been abandoned at the present time. Copper is brought in from other peoples by tribes serving as intermediaries. Wood sculpture is rapidly disappearing. Basketry [12] remains popular.
[286] Weaving no longer exists at the present time; in fact, looms can no longer be found in the region.

593* The family is patriarchal and the political organization corresponds to it; there are only heads of families. Indeed, among the Nkundó the family is the complete nucleus and foundation of the society. The result is a democratic and oligarchic government, but one very different from any we would call by that name in Europe.
554 Certain men become prominent because of their intelligence, their eloquence, their bravery, or their wealth, having great influence and often giving the appearance of chiefs whose authority extends beyond their own clan, but none of them has ever founded an empire. In the past the Bongili were the most courageous tribe, and the one most feared. Besides, their geographic location was in their favor, as they had the Lifumba and the Bombomba, two sister tribes, on each side of them.

[517] The artistic tastes of the Nkundó are directed chiefly toward
538 music and the dance. Their oral literature is also very rich; it includes, for example, the epic of Nsongó and Lianja (1) and that

1. The most important portions of this epic have been translated and published by Father Boelaert, M.S.C., in Congo, 1934, Vol. 1, pp. 49 and 197.

of the tortoise.

521 831 195 which do not shock others at all. (1)

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 831 514 521 576 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use certain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their place. Thus the Nkundó say: ñtswá bokako w'ákusa, "I am going behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and njôtsw'êsendá, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njôtsw'óténa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ñjeta felé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

514 576 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

514 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

514 576 578 831 Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 834 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of [554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootɔ (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 604 834 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

P
178 doctor who was in charge of the dispensary at Flandria at that time
588 informed me of the case of a Botswa fruit harvester in the service of
589 the H.C.B. who had syphilis of unquestionably sexual origin.
169

M Though a racial difference constitutes an obstacle to marriage,
582 a tribal or ethnic one does not. Where the geographic situation permits, true Nkundó, such as the Elingá, marry members of neighboring groups such as the Ngombe, the Mbole, or the Ekonda.

Article II. Social Status

M Among the Nkundó a difference in social status is not an
554 obstacle to marriage. They have no social classes strictly speaking.
582 They differentiate between those with authority, those who are in-
[565] feriors, and the individuals or families who are not entitled to their
[571] word in political matters; but these ideas do not come into play in ordinary social relations, [245] and especially not with respect to marriage. A person may belong to a clan which is inferior, subject, dependent, foreign, or descended from a slave; nevertheless he may marry even a member of the group's senior clan. These distinctions are in the realm of politics; a marriage is a matter of law, affection, and good relations based on the payment of a bride price.

M Actual slaves are an exception, but here a distinction must
567 be made between the sexes. Unions with slave women were very
582 common, but they were not marriages strictly speaking. Before a real marriage was entered into, the woman was set free. More details on this subject will be given in Chapter VII, Article V. For men the situation is altogether different. The condition of a slave was not only inferior, it was dishonorable, though a bit less so than among the Anciens. It might be overlooked if the love between the pair was unusually ardent, and there are a few clans descended from a "free" woman and a slave man, who were united in a proper and legitimate marriage for which the master paid the bride price.

There is no longer any opposition to the union of a "free" person with the descendant of a mixed marriage. The children may always claim kinship with their maternal ancestors who in these

matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

1. Among the Nkundó no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that the was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nikó, nikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wémya, -émya). [246]

Article III. Kinship

Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the name nkɔ́ndɛ: ɛ́ɛ̂ bɔ́ŋga, referring to the bɔ́ŋga on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and ɛ́ɛ̂ kɔ́nja, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a nkɔ́ndɔ́ ɛ́ɛ̂ wɔ́lí, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a nkɔ́ndɔ́" is ɔ́ja nkɔ́ndɔ́, "to make a nkɔ́ndɔ́ come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression téna nkɔ́ndɔ́, a term which is very probably transferred from the bolómbɛ́. (See the next article.) [348]

Article III. The Bolómbɛ́

The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the primus inter pares of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundó term, is ikɔ́ lɔ́ɛ́ (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives

1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundó, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

a bolómbɛ́. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occured at Bɛ́ɛ́mbɛ́ (Bombwanja), in the Bongílí family. Bɔ́ŋkɔ́ɔ́ w'Ílúmwa had married Eyeke of Bolɔ́ma and by her had his eldest son

Ikunjwêkulu. (2) But before her marriage to Bonkoso, Eyeke had al-

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2. For his genealogy see Chapter III, Article II. A great-grandson of this Ikunjwêkulu is, I should say, approximately fifty years old.

ready given birth to another boy, Mbéo, whom she brought with her "in the shoulder strap." (3) Subsequently, Mbéo acquired much

3. See Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3.

wealth and built a large harem for himself. He wanted to show his important position and decided to make one of his wives a bolîmbé. Thereupon, his uterine brother Ikunjwêkulu became furious and called together the three other family heads of Besombé: Elongama ef Longómbé of Bokenda Embombé of Ikolé, and Esola of Befóola. He said to them: "Come and see the extraordinary and astonishing thing that is happening. Mbéo came with my mother in the shoulder strap. How then does he dare to create bolîmbé?" They examined the facts and were very angry [349]. They called a meeting of all the family heads of all the neighboring villages in order to explain the case to them. Seated under the tree where the deliberations were held, all the men spent a long time awaiting Mbéo's arrival. As he was too long in coming, one of his wives was sent to ask him to hurry. She found him dead, already quite stiff.

A bolîmbé is created much later than a favorite, for a polygamist can attain the necessary social position only at a fairly advanced age.

The choice of a bolîmbé is not a matter of preferential love. It is not a question of relations within the harem, but of the statement of the husband's social importance. Usually he chooses a woman who belongs to an influential clan and is a model of conjugal life and good breeding. She is certainly the object of special affection on his part, but not of a preference in love. Note again that the bomîma can never become bolîmbé, but she must be consulted and her opinion is decisive. Thus her own ebîsa is often chosen as bolîmbé.

[595] [554] On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolɛ́mbɛ́, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolɛ́mbɛ́, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangɛ́ (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [297] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitɔ́ɔ) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolɛ́mbɛ́ wa bikɛ́tɔ́, "bolɛ́mbɛ́ with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[609] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangɛ́, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping [350] in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [329] surrounded by a fence of bɔ́ɔkɔ posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called lɔ́kɔ.

There the bolɛ́mbɛ́ will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [594] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundɔ́ law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bɔ́ɔfaya ɛ́fɔ́ɔfɛ lokɔ́ɔnga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

595" 554 that no one will see her. She lives in this house in the company of her ebisa, her daughters, some female relatives, or even another of her husband's wives, who must wait on her, prepare food for her, etc., and who go out and enter freely. Her husband also enters at will and spends the usual number of nights with her. No other man is permitted to enter the enclosure.

During her period of seclusion, the bolɛmbɛ may not do the slightest work. She does not wash with water, but only with palm oil. She walks only on mats. She is also exempt from mourning for her parents. (Compare with Chapter I, Part 1, Article II.)

When the period of seclusion comes to an end, the husband announces the coming-out feast. There is merrymaking, dancing, and drinking. Mats are spread from the door of [351] the hut of seclusion all the way to the middle of the street. The two men who brought the woman to the hut come again and, taking her by the arms at the entrance to the enclosure, lead her over the mats. The ceremony thus ends without further ado.

The bolɛmbɛ is henceforth free and acts like any other woman except for the wearing of furs. She may work, draw water, cook, travel, visit her parents, etc. But her husband's honor and his reputation as a rich man require that he give his [563] [567] bolɛmbɛ one or several slaves, or Batwa, or -- as is more frequently done -- one or two bilisa, who are supposed to take [371] care of her housework and thus free the princess.

595" 554 857 614 Adultery with her -- after her seclusion -- is more severely punished than misconduct with an ordinary woman as regards the indemnity to be paid. But as a flagrant insult, it is considered very serious indeed, not so much as an infringement of marital rights as an attack on the honor of the whole clan or group of clans involved. Thus, while adultery with a nkɔndɛ, for instance, is a private matter, arousing the husband's jealousy and anger, misconduct with a bolɛmbɛ is a public offense. The whole clan is enraged -- for they believe that their honor has been attacked, and all the members together press for vengeance for

this outrage (nkgla cioki ćy'biémi?). It is a kind of national dishonor. This observation also clearly pinpoints the great difference between the favorite and the boiémbé.

The following custom should be mentioned in this connection: if any man, even a stranger or one who comes from a great distance, comes and -- over the fence -- strikes the roof of a boiémbé's ilaka of seclusion with his elofó (1) as a call to

1. A wooden bell (see Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, p. 366, figs. 4 and 5).

war, the whole village is obliged to take up arms to defend him. All the men [362] accompany him and unite with his family against the enemy clan, whatever the distance may be. The Nkundó say that the act of touching the boiémbé's hut infuriates the entire clan and makes them take up arms without hesitation. (1)

1. Compare the result of a serious offense, whose effect is entirely in the offender's favor, to analogous cases described previously, for example in Chapter III, Article VII; Chapter VI, Article V, 4, Appendix; and below in Chapter VIII, Article II, 3, (2).

One last indication of the social nature of this institution is the fact that the boiémbé has the right to sit beside her husband at public gatherings and feasts, a prerogative which she alone of all women possesses. With her is a boy or girl who serves as her "boy" and carries the seat (bofoga) on which she sits.

When a boiémbé dies her husband may put another in her place. To do so he repeats the ceremony described above. It is called sangoja boiémbé, "to make succeed to the title of boiémbé."

As we saw in Chapter I, Part 1, Article II, a man may even make his daughter a boiémbé.

The name bolémbé seems to come from the fact that for an instant during the installation ceremony the woman is naked. In fact in certain dialects the word means "nudity."

Nowadays this name is common among Nkundé women (rarely men), but it does not indicate that they are bolémbé. The name is borne in memory of ancestresses or relatives who had that position and is transmitted in the family like any other name.

All the tribes under discussion here use the same term, bolémbé. The Sombombe alone say bofié. (2)

2. Elsewhere, as in the Losangaya region, among the Boseka, etc., the bolémbé is called ekila (interdiction, taboo).

It is clear from everything that has been said that the ekindé and the bolémbé have nothing in common with each other. [363] The two institutions are decidedly different. Nowadays they are beginning to be confused with each other, however. For the installation of a bolémbé has become extremely rare, and in some regions it has already disappeared. The colonial government has established districts and appointed chiefs in charge of them. Very frequently, they are not those who in the purely indigenous order would have been the most influential men, the masters, those who would have the biggest say in their society, who would be said to have the iséngé, the first place.

As far as I have been able to observe, the other tribes on the equator also have the two types of wives with special positions, who bear names which vary with the dialects.

Do the Ndémbé and the Boléngé between the Boloko and the Congo have only the bolémbé? That is the conclusion one draws from Engels' study of the Wangata (Revue congolaise, Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 33). If that were so, the frequent contacts with this people may have increased the confusion even more. Natives who are strangers to the Boléngé tribe but who have lived many years among them as catechists, have maintained, however, that

they distinguish very clearly between the bolómbó and the favorite. They even added that the nkúnú enjoy no privileges in this realm. (1)

1. The institution of the nkúnú is not very widespread among the tribes treated in our study. (See "Les Coutumes funéraires des Nkundó [Funeral customs of the Nkundo]," in Anthropos) (in press).

In the course of a visit I myself made to the western Bolóngé (in September, 1933), I learned that a man who had a special position could have two bolómbó; the bomótsa proposed her ebísa as candidate, and the second wife did the same for hers. Thus there was a bolómbó w'ílómé and a bolómbó w'ílíi (the latter more especially called ekíla. I also observed that they made a very clear distinction between bolómbó and [354] nkúnú, just like the peoples treated in this study.

As to the function of messenger, which is attributed to the bolómbó by Engels (as well as by Father Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 532), it is not performed more by her than by any other woman in the harem. Any of them, without distinction based on rank or date of marriage, may be charged with a mission. The only custom of this sort which involves such a distinction is found among the Bolóngé-Ntómbá living between the Congo and the Boloko. It is as follows: an influential man sometimes sent his bolómbó (one or two) to stop a quarrel, or even a battle between two villages. When she intervened, the opposing parties made a truce, pending the arrival and the decision of her husband in person.

Article IV. The Ebísa

An ebísa is a woman taken as wife by the husband of one of her relatives -- a sister, aunt, or older cousin. The relative

555 In little domestic quarrels, the bomɔtsa's children like to take advantage of the top rank occupied by their mother. Later, they will have the right to priority, before their brothers, in matters of inheritance and family authority.

567 The children of slave women are loved by their father in the same way as their brothers and sisters. However, they are often the object of manifestations of contempt and humiliation on the part of others, especially verbal ones, but only when disputes arise. In particular, they have to submit to the insult of having it said [369] that they are without bonyangɔ, "a maternal clan." This is one of the most serious insults that can be inflicted by a Nkundɔ. Nevertheless, their father protects them as much as he can.

[428] The child of a slave woman has no right to an inheritance. Clearly, he lacks for nothing. But he has no political rights, even if he is his father's first-born.

567 The posterity of a slave are not considered as such in matrimonial matters, as we have pointed out in Chapter V, Article II. If the groups descended from free women are extinct, the rights of the clan are inherited by the posterity of a slave, to the exclusion of related clans whose ancestors were entirely free.

What is the effect of the system of polygamy on the birth rate? There has been much debate on this question for it is very difficult to answer. Complete statistics well compiled from detailed methodical lists would be necessary. For it is a fact that in many monogamous households the woman is the former wife of a polygamist and for that reason can no longer be counted as a monogamist's wife. In addition it would be necessary to exclude from monogamous households those women who did not marry until an advanced age, after having lived freely for a fairly long time, for example in the centers.

In my opinion the birth rate is endangered above all by the need for individual love and the difference in the ages of the spouses, which is inseparable from the system of polygamy as it now exists. The polygamist's wife instinctively seeks another

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all
945 the special regulations lose their force and they become like
554 everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children,
845 but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called boyéngwá since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called boyéngwá, since she is likóka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

945 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
789 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
754 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are ex-
845 tremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yéndembe, or Yéndendo, or Yélele. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., lífótswé mómo.

463 Division of labor is unknown, and each person works entirely on his own, without the help of a middleman. There are no laborers [177] and certainly no artisans unless there happens to be some artisan or other who learned his trade under the government or at one or other of the Mission posts and has returned to his village after having completed his contract.

As a rule, such people do not find sufficient work in their own villages, and, as they are usually in possession of a few boxes, clothes, and pots and pans which they have acquired with the savings of their monthly salary, they play the grand gentleman in their village until their goods and chattels have been used up and worn out.

"Njolemwa Bosala," he says, "I am tired of work." "Njowa l'ompele," "I am dying of the heavy, difficult work."

Several of them there return to one or the other of the centers of the White settlers and again offer themselves as craftsmen.

●554 A good craftsman has a high reputation among the natives, and his social position is even a very good one for a Negro. He is able regularly to supply food for his wife and children and also to get himself clothes.

326 Although most Negroes work individually, this is not true of the smith who has to have helpers in order to do his job.

465 Since the Mongo Negro knows nothing of wages, his helpers get
436 part of the income, consisting of mitako [a kind of metal currency] or some part of the work that has been done, either a knife or a lance, or a foot or arm ring.

I. THE SMITH'S TRADE.

326 Of the various industrial trades, that of the smith is certainly the
554 first in rank. The smith is one of the leading people [94] in the village and one of the inevitable persons to have a decisive voice in village affairs whether in settling differences or in meetings.

In fact, the smith is the only one of the Mongo Negroes who works regularly and does not rest on his oars. From what he earns he is able to buy quite a number of wives, and he is regarded as one of the village heads whose wishes must be consulted.

326 The native smith works not only with iron but also with copper which he melts down in the same manner from copper sticks (longele: mitako) and old, worn copper rings.

[439 435] The copper sticks, that nowadays sell at 30 for a franc, come from Europe; copper ore is unknown here.

The copper objects made by the smith are as follows.

326 301 Bakonga: all that is of copper

1. Bongombwa: necklace, often weighing ten kilograms or more; value, 1,000 mitako.
2. Lokolo: leg ring, weighing four to six kilograms and more; value, 200 to 500 mitako.
3. Bolongu: arm ring, not heavy.
4. Ingwete: arm ring, not heavy.
5. Bongenza: leg ring that rattles when the wearer walks.
6. Bosankere: leg ring.
7. Limpala: great leg rings in spiral form, twisted out of thick copper wire, which cover the whole of the lower leg. They [435] bear much resemblance to the springs in a mattress. Among the Negroes these have a value of 500 mitako.
8. Bompulenge: resembling a small limpala, these were formerly worn on the arms by old people, but they are now out of fashion and no longer made.

326 554 In the whole district there is only one smith, a certain Elumbu in the village Lilangi (Basankusu), who knows how to make copper bells. This Black is a celebrity to every Mongo Negro.

According to the Negroes, there is a smith, a certain Bokedzu from the vicinity of the Ikelemba River, who knew how to put a new rifle together from the parts of old broken ones and did so successfully. According to the Negroes, the government agent, however, took the rifle away from him, but in my opinion, and in that of others, this black [577] rifle manufacturer belongs in the realm of fable, the more so as a Negro is not at all afraid of a lie.

Now the molembe choose the Bilepo

624 [533] *Okoke*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the ***molembe*** have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkuma Akuke* and his wife, *Nsuo*.

624 342 The member of the ***molembe*** whose right it is by inheritance to place the ***montolo*** (see Plates) upon the head of the ***nkumu*** now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the ***nkumu*** is the first of his line, the ***montolo*** is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the ***molembe*** until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the ***montolo*** is an occasion for merriment. *Nkuma Akuke* calls for his ***montolo***, but the ***molembe*** tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkuma Akuke* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the ***molembe*** whose duty it is to place the ***montolo*** on the head of the ***nkumu*** begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the ***nkumu*** might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby ***nkumu*** are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lobondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The ***montolo*** then being placed on *Nkuma Akuke*'s head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first ***nkumu*** in a village is known as *Nkumu Lobondola*. If there is another section of the village with an ***nkumu*** of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Ijuli Bokuya*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An ***nkumu*** chosen by a ***molembe*** which is also the ***mosuwa mokanda***, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as [554] *Nkumu e Bitindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of ***nkumu*** chosen by other ***molembe***.

624 342 [361] The ***nkumu*** is borne off to his ***nsango***, his residence, which in this case is temporary, to be replaced later by a permanent one. The ***nsango*** comprises the whole unit of buildings for the ***nkumu***, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the ***ekunga*** where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His ***ekunga*** and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making a place known as *ipuna*. In the case of a new ***nkumu*** the screen is temporary, but when the permanent ***nsango*** is built, a permanent *ipuna* is made by planting umbrella trees (***mokondo***, sing. ***mokondo***) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered from intrusion, the ***nkumu*** remains in retirement (*asili*) for a month.[1] While he remains

[1] *Asili* refers to the sitting of a hen on eggs, ***nkumu*** at this juncture of the ceremonies. the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

624 thus, *Nsono* is a very prominent figure. Still arrayed as previously described, she sits outside the *nongo* near the road on the special stool of the *nkumu*. Nobody may pass her with food, a humane law, considering that she must spend the day fasting. If anyone attempts to do so she catches the unlucky individual, helps herself to as much of his food as she wants, the victim meanwhile begging her to be merciful and leave him a small portion, and the booty is taken into the *ipana*. During this sentinel duty *Nsono* must still keep the parrot's feather in her mouth and maintain silence, so, in case she catches an unsuspecting bearer of food, the remonstrance and argument are all one-sided.[1] After the first day *Nsono* no longer sits outside the *nongo* but goes from place to place in the village, choosing spots where people may least expect her, hoping thus to reap a bigger harvest for her pains. This is kept up for eight days, which comprise two Tumba ' weeks ' of three days' work and one of rest. The rest-day is appropriately named *boina bo nsono* after the duty of *Nsono* of sitting doing nothing day by day. The eight days of this ceremony over, *Nsono* lays aside her gourd and plantain stalk, which are placed at the foot of the first central supporting post [302] of the *ebanga* on entering. She is given a fresh coating of chalk and three coloured stripes are drawn the length of her back and down her arms. She still remains close to the *nkumu*.

[567] Various personalities are connected with the *nongo* of an *nkumu*. The *Basele* is a male slave, clothed in a skin breech cloth, whose duty it is to receive callers at the *ipana* before admitting them to the presence of the *nkumu*.

624 595 *Mpenge* is the name taken by the wife first married by the *nkumu*. From henceforth she no longer accompanies her husband, and their cohabitation ceases unless the *nkumu* is willing to pay her each time the sum of one hundred rods. But the *nkumu* is obliged to eat all food she cooks for him even though they have a quarrel. *Mpenge* does not honour her husband with the special greeting accorded to *nkumu*, but greets her husband and all other *nkumu* as she would ordinary people.[2] The second wife of an *nkumu* must assume the name of *Iyombo Anganda*, but no importance attaches to her position.

624 516 Among the Tumba generally, apart from the Bonginda, a woman is chosen from the *molombe* to bear the title *Bolumbu Itina i Ekopo* (*Bolumbu*, the ' raison d'être ' of the *ekopo*). She is, it would seem, a symbolical figure, a reminder that the *ekopo* owes its existence to the *molombe* of which this woman becomes the titular head. While the *nkumu* is still in seclusion the chosen woman is taken to the open space between the *ipana* and the row of sons' houses, known as the *nanda*. Here, in the presence of the assembled crowd she is praised by being addressed, '*Bolumbu Itina, bototo!*' and the crowd exclaims, '*Bwoo!*'[3] Strips of leopard skin, about eighteen

[845] [1] It is interesting to note that there are some exceptions to those who may be caught and robbed by *Nsono* during her eight days of watching. No member of the *molombe* may be thus treated, twins and their parents are exempt, and also all children born to the *nkumu* before he attains office, these being termed *mosoi*.

[554 595] [2] Besides *Mpenge*, a mother of twins is also exempt from according *nkumu* special salutations, and among some groups the father of twins is also exempt.

[3] This ceremony gives husbands of any village, whether they are members of the *molombe* or not, the opportunity to single out a favourite wife for special honour, for at this time any woman may be given the name of *Bolumbu*, though not with the significant complement of *Itina i Ekopo*. The ceremony is similar, is performed at the *nanda*, but besides receiving the strips of leopard skin, she must be divested of all her clothing, a new *lumbu* and *mpongo* are then placed round her, and the strips of skin then attached to the new belt.

614 homestead, it is deserted by the inhabitants. On the new dwell-
596 ing site the sons each build their own shelter. In contrast to the
592 groups of the type A-E, the group living within a homestead is
[768] finite: its existence ends with the father's death. Only a man whose father (in the European meaning of the term) has died may have a shelter. Thus the homestead community is interposed between the A-group and the small family.

614 To sum up the characteristic features of the A-groups: Membership determined by male descent; unity of legal power, especially insofar as landed property and inheritance law is concerned the senior has full power; succession by simple seniority; theoretically unlimited existence of the group. The A-groups consist of small families who live together in homesteads under one father in each case.

Groups of Rank B

614 There is usually a friendly, neighborly relationship be-
793 tween the A-groups which form part of a B-group. People assist each other to a large extent, and there is joint consultation on most matters. Group B has only one Nkúmú iloki, "master of the hidden power," the priest of the kinship group, who is consulted by all the members of the group. He functions during the magical preparations for the hunt; he is consulted before any important undertaking. During the leave-taking ceremony after a burial, he converses with the deceased, and people turn to him when the ancestors have appeared to them in their dreams to transmit their desires, orders, or other information to the living. He protects the people of his group from the ill will, ndoki, of the dead and the living. The priest of the kinship group is used as the criterion [194] to determine which group of homogeneous A-groups represents a B-group. The priest of the kinship group is descended from a certain one of the related A-groups.

614 There is a difference in rank among the A-groups of a
554 B-group -- one group will be regarded as older -- but this is

614 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The
554 headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded
423 as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the
895 genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer